

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 ISO-00 SP-02 ICA-11 AID-05 EB-08
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FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6130
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
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DAMASCUS FOR AGATT

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, EAID, ENRG, EPAP, BR, CU, IZ
SUBJECT: CUBAN TRADE DELEGATION VISITS IRAQ

1. ACCORDING TO LOCAL PRESS, CUBAN TRADE DELEGATION
CONSISTING OF 12 EXPERTS, HEADED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF
THE CUBAN ECONOMIC STATE COMMISSION, ARRIVED IN BAGHDAD
APRIL 29 FOR DISCUSSION OF ECONOMIC, TRADE AND TECHNICAL
RELATIONS. IRAQ AND CUBA HAVE FORMED SIX COMMITTEES
TO DISCUSS COOPERATION IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS: TRADE
AND ECONOMIC MATTERS, COMMUNICATIONS, HOUSING, SPORTS,
PUBLIC HEALTH AND INDUSTRY.

2. LOCAL PRESS ALSO REPORTS THAT IRAQ HAS NOW RATIFIED
A LOAN TO CUBA SIGNED IN DECEMBER 1977 BUT GIVES NO
FURTHER DETAILS.

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3. COMMENT. THE VISIT OF CUBAN TRADE DELEGATION TO
BAGHDAD COINCIDES WITH VISIT OF IRAQI VICE PRESIDENT
MA'ROUF TO HAVANA AND FOLLOWS RECENT VISITS TO IRAQ
BY PROMINENT CUBANS.

4. POSSIBILITIES FOR TRADE MAINLY ENCOMPASS EXCHANGE
OF IRAQI OIL FOR CUBAN SUGAR. IN 1976, THE LATEST YEAR

FOR WHICH STATISTICS ARE AVAILABLE, IRAQ CONSUMED ABOUT 300,000 TONS RAW SUGAR, OF WHICH 132,000 TONS WERE IMPORTED. LOCAL PRODUCTION IS NOT EXPECTED TO KEEP UP WITH THE GROWTH IN DEMAND, ESTIMATED TO REACH 500,000 TONS BY 1980. BRAZIL, RATHER THAN CUBA, HAS BEEN IRAQ'S PRINCIPAL SUPPLIER; IN 1976 IT SUPPLIED 85,000 TONS WORTH 43 MILLION DOLLARS, AND CUBA 47,000 TONS WORTH 15 MILLION DOLLARS. THOUGH BOTH COUNTRIES' SUGAR EXPORTS TO IRAQ WILL LIKELY GROW AS CONSUMPTION INCREASES, THE GOI MAY BE RELUCTANT TO DECREASE BRAZIL'S SHARE BECAUSE IT IS ONE OF IRAQ'S LARGEST PURCHASERS OF OIL (MORE THAN A BILLION DOLLARS' WORTH IN EACH OF THE LAST TWO YEARS), AND THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN PRESSURING THE GOI TO PROVIDE OFFSETTING SALES OPPORTUNITIES.

5. IRAQI 1976 STATISTICS GIVE EXPORTS TO CUBA AS ZERO, BUT THIS FIGURE DOES NOT INCLUDE OIL. WHETHER OR NOT CUBA HAS PREVIOUSLY PURCHASED OIL FROM IRAQ, IT MAY DO SO IN THE FUTURE BECAUSE IRAQI LOANS ARE FREQUENTLY TIED TO OIL PURCHASES.

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